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RCA88796

Application Serial No. 09/581,709

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for processing and outputting a program signal, comprising:
  - a data receiver (120,122) for receiving a signal channel selections from a user;
  - a tuner (100,105) for selecting one of a plurality of signal channels in response to said signal channel selection from a user, the selected one of said plurality of signal channels including a program signal;
  - a signal output (RGB OUT) for providing an output signal derived from said program signal;
  - an auxiliary data decoder (115) for detecting program related information included in each said program signal; and
  - a central processing unit (112) operatively connected to said data receiver, said signal input, said signal output and said auxiliary data decoder, wherein said central processing unit controls said output signal for preventing user access to said program signal upon detecting retuning of a current channel selection has been previously selected thereby preventing user access during a time delay between tuning and receipt of program related information within a predetermined time period.
2. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said central processing unit controls said output signal for reducing user access to said program signal for at least until said program related information has been determined when said signal channel selection has been previously selected within a predetermined time period.
3. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said program signal is a television signal.
4. (Cancelled)

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5. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined time period comprises the previous signal channel selection.

6. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 5, wherein said predetermined time period comprises the signal channel selection preceding said previous signal channel selection.

7. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said central processing unit controls said output signal for reducing user access to said program signal of said signal channel selection when a current channel selection has been previously selected within a predetermined time period and program related information of said previously selected channel meets a user selected blocking criteria.

8. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said central processor unit is capable of providing an On Screen Display menu for allowing user selection of said user selected blocking criteria.

9. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said central processing unit is capable of providing a restricted access On Screen Display menu for allowing user selection of said first user selected blocking criteria.

10. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 9, wherein access to said restricted access On Screen Display menu is password protected.

11. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said central processing unit controls said output signal for reducing user access to said program signal by one of blanking the video signal, replacing the video signal with an On Screen Display message, muting the audio signal and disabling associated closed captions.

12. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said central processing unit controls said output signal to reduce user access when said a

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current channel selection that has been previously selected within a predetermined time period is detected, unless said program related information was previously determined to be within an acceptable level within a predetermined period of time.

13. (Previously Presented) The apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising a signal input (101,102) for receiving a second program signal from an external signal source, and a switch (140) operatively connected to said tuner, said signal input, said signal output and said central processing unit, said switch operatively coupling a respective one of said program signal and said second program signal with said signal output in response to a signal source selection from the user, wherein said signal processor controls said output signal for reducing user access to said output signal for at least until said program related information has been determined when a new signal source selection is received.